Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1775 - August 19 2011

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1775 with a release date of Friday, August 19th 2011 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. ARISSat One continues to amaze ham radio but its battery is growing weaker as the days pass. Also, Heathkit says that it plans to return to the kit supply business, the cost of vanity calls are going up, the worlds first ever Digital Amateur Television contest is almost here and don't forget to remove the batteries. Find out why on Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) report number 1775 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: ARISSAT-1 DROPPING TO LOW POWER EVEN IN SUNLIGHT

According to several reports ARISSat-1 has been switching into low duty cycle mode. This, even while in complete sunlight. Amateur Radio Newsline's Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, has the latest:

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When ARISSat One is in darkness, in order to conserve battery power, it switches into a mode where it transmits for 40 seconds and then shut down for 2 minutes. However, on Thursday, August 11th and Friday the 12th a number of hams began reporting that ARISSat One was in low duty cycle mode when the satellite appeared to be fully illuminated by the sun.

Now comes a probable explanation from hardware developer Tony Monteiro, AA2TX. He reports that at certain bad sun angles, the solar panels may not provide enough power to run the satellite even though it is in full sunlight.

AA2TX says that the power from the panels can actually drop to as low as 2.5 watts at really bad angles but the satellite needs around 8 watts average to run in high power mode. This means that the satellite would have to draw current from the battery to run in high power mode even though it is in the sun. This discharge would reduce the life of the battery so to minimize the damage and prolong the life of the satellite, it will switch itself to low power mode under these conditions.

Monteiro adds that he does not know for sure if this is what is happening but this condition is within the predicted nominal operation of the satellite.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, in Los Angeles.

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Meantime, ARISSat One controllers have confirmed that the battery voltage of the satellite has been decreasing during eclipse at a faster rate than expected. Specifically, the battery voltage is getting lower with each eclipse period. It therefore is taking longer for the battery to charge up to 32.5V to allow the switch from Low Power to High Power when the satellite enters an illumination period. (AMSAT, ARISSat)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: CHICKEN LITTLE CONTEST FOR ARISSAT 1

Meantime, Amsat has announced that its again holding another of its famed Chicken Little contests. This one to see if anyone can guess or predict as to when ARISSat One will fall out of orbit.

According to AMSAT, this is defined as the time ARISSat One crosses an altitude of 78 kilometers, which is considered to be the point of no return. And as in the past, there will be three Chicken Little divisions. These are a student category for Kindergarten through grade 8 grades, another student category for High School, grades 9 through 12 and then one for the rest of us.

Submissions will close on September 15th at 23:59:00 UTC. Once ARISSat One actually falls from the sky the closest predictions in each category will be recognized for their achievement. Submissions go by e-mail to CHICKENLITTLE (at) ARISSAT1 (dot) ORG

And less we forget, while not part of the contest, the actual re-entry of ARISSat One into the Earts atmosphere may be visible depending on the location where it takes place. As such, reports are encouraged.

And for those not aware, Chicken Little is a fable about a chicken who believes the world is coming to an end. The phrase "the sky is falling" features prominently in the story. As such it has become a rather common expression indicating a hysterical or mistaken belief that disaster is imminent.

(AMSAT)

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RADIO RULES: VANITY CALL SIGN COST TO RISE STARTING SEPT 9

The price of a vanity call sign in the United States is on the rise. On August 10th the FCC announced that the cost of an Amateur Radio vanity call will increase 90 cents to $14.20 for a 10 year license term. The new fee take effect 30 days after publication in the Federal Register making September 9th the first day the new fee is in effect. (ARRL)

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RADIO BUSINESS: HEATHKIT SAYS IT IS RETURNING TO THE KIT SUPPLY MARKETPLACE

Heathkit says it is re-entering the kit business that it abandoned

almost two decades ago. In an announcement posted to its www dot heathkit dot com website, Heathkit Educational Systems which is the current name for the company states that in late August the company will debut its new line of do-it-yourself kits for common around-the-house items.

Don't look for ham radio gear to be a top priority even though the word on the street is that kits for the amateur radio market may be down the pike. Right now the company is starting off with more general interest kits with their first entry being a Garage Parking Assistant or G-P-A for short. The Garage Parking assistant kit lets someone build their own system that uses ultrasonic sound to locate a car as it enters the garage. The system signals to the driver using LED lights mounted on the wall when the car is detected and in the perfect spot for parking. Next on the market will be a Wireless Swimming Pool Monitor kit followed by many more novel items.

For those of you to young to remember, it was on March 30, 1992, that the then managers of Heathkit announced that after some 45 years the company was closing out its kits and leaving the business. In its hey-day, Heathkits were products of the Heath Company of Benton Harbor, Michigan. Their build it yourself product line included everything from electronic test equipment to high fidelity home audio equipment, television receivers, and of coarse amateur radio gear. It was the emergence and subsequent domination of the world electronic marketplace by Pacific Rim manufacturers who could produce and market completely assembled equipment at prices far less than Heathkit or anyone else could supply a do it yourself version that lead to the demise of names like Eico, Paco, and of coarse Heathkit.

So why has Heathkit decided to re-enter the kit market? To hazard a guess you have to remember that the current incarnation of Heathkit is an educational materials supplier. As such it has likely taken notice of the burgeoning maker and hacker community. This is an ever expanding group of technology hobbyist's world wide that in recent years has grown into a multi-million dollar business opportunity for those smart enough to recognize it and are ready to fill the void. These are also the people that many believe will be the next generation of technology leaders and radio amateurs.

The Heathkit announcement says nothing about the business rationale for going back into the kit supply business but it does state that the company wants to bring to its customers interesting and unique products. As such it is interested in learning what types of products that kit builders would like to see brought to the marketplace. Anyone interested can submit their suggestions by mail addressed to 2024 Hawthorne Avenue St. Joseph, Michigan, 49085 or at www.heathkit.com. (ARNewsline(tm) with some information supplied by KC8VWM, N4OZ and others.)

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ENFORCEMENT: DUTCH AUTHORITIES TO ISSUE INSTANT FINES TO PIRATE BROADCASTERS

According to news reports, the Radiocommunications Agency of the

Netherlands will soon launch a new and tougher policy to deal with pirate radio stations. One which could lead to fines of up to 2,500 euros or $3600 imposed on an unlicensed broadcaster as soon as half an hour after they receive a warning letter.

This the agency's latest move in a cat and mouse game with the pirate stations. It used to take months before someone was punished for illegal broadcasting. That has since been reduced to several weeks, and could now be cut to half an hour under the new policy.

There have already been 1600 warnings issued this year, and 60 people have been fined. The fine is not necessarily for the pirate, but handed to the owner of the land which is used for broadcasting.

The pirate radio broadcasters are now increasingly using mobile stations, so after receiving a warning letter they simply move to a different location to broadcast. The Radiocommunications Agency wants to introduce its new instant fine policy as soon as possible as a way to prevent these nomadic broadcasters from escaping punishment. Its said that some of the wandering pirates use transmission mast as tall as 40 meters in height. (Media Network)

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BREAK 1

>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the N3EVW repeater serving Scranton, Pennsylvania.

(5 sec pause here)

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ENFORCEMENT: LAUDERHILL FLORIDA UNLICENSED BROADCASTER HAS FINE CUT IN HALF

Back here in the United States. the FCC has cut in half the amount of a fine that it had issued to Christopher M. Myers, of Lauderhill, Florida. This for his alleged operation of an unlicensed radio transmitter on the frequency 95.9 MHz. Amateur Radio Newsline's Norm Seeley, KI7UP, reports:

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Back on July 12, 2010, the Enforcement Bureaus Miami Office issued a $10,000 Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture to Christopher Myers for operation of an unlicensed radio station. Myers contested the then proposed fine. In his petition to the FCC Myers requested cancellation or reduction of the proposed forfeiture based on his claims that he did not operate the unlicensed station and that he was unable to pay the $10,000 forfeiture.

Specifically Myers asserted that although he owns the residential condominium referenced in the Notice of Apparent Liability that the

condominium was occupied and controlled by a renter from 2007 until 2010 and that he resided elsewhere during that period. He also stated that although he was present in the condominium during the inspection on March 7, 2010, the transmitter was not transmitting at that time and that after he received notice of the unlicensed operation, that he took affirmative steps to terminate the lease with the unidentified renter. His response also stated that a broadcasting organization known as WBIG is responsible for any unlicensed operations on 95.9 MHz and 91.7 MHz; and that he does not hold any pecuniary interest in WBIG. Lastly he claimed that the $10,000 fine constituted a financial hardship and provided the required documentation to back up this claim

In its decision on the matter the FCC said that it did not find Myerss statement that he did not reside in the residential condominium reliable. Myerss drivers license and most recent vehicle registration list the condominium as his residence. The FCC says that Myers received and signed for several documents at the condominium. It says that it believes this demonstrates that Myers did in fact reside in the condominium.

Also says the FCC, it disagrees with Myers statement that the station was not transmitting on March 7, 2010. It notes that at approximately 6:50 P.M. on March 7, 2010, agents from the Miami Office determined that an unlicensed station was operating from the condominium. The Lauderhill Police Department executed a search warrant for the condominium at approximately 10:00 P.M. and found only Myers present. A bit later, FCC agents arrived and found the same. It says that the unlicensed station continued to transmit until FCC agents disconnected the transmitter which was located in the residence, doing so at approximately 11:10 P.M. As such, the FCC says that it finds no reason to cancel or reduce the forfeiture on this basis.

However, regarding Myers inability to pay the entire $10,000 fine, the FCC has determined that, in general, gross revenues are the best indicator of an ability to pay a forfeiture. Based on this it finds that Myers is unable to pay the full proposed forfeiture amount, so it has granted a reduction down to $5,000.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, Im Norm Seeley, KI7UP, in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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Its unknown if Myers plans to file a further appeal. (FCC)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: WORLDS FIRST DIGITAL ATV QSO PARTY AUG 26 -27

The world's first Digital Amateur TV QSO Party will be on Melbourne Australia's VK3RTV repeater next weekend. The QSO Party has been organized by Peter Cossins VK3BFG as control station and will include the Amateur Television Network of California and the British Amateur Television Club.

VK3BFG said that 8 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time on Friday August

26th will be the kick-off time of the two-day event as part of the Amateur Radio Victoria celebration of its centenary. Also, on Saturday the August 27th at 1 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time there be a link up with Don Hill KE6BXT in California and also a connection with the W6ATN ATV Repeater. (VK3PC)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: PARACHUTE MOBILE TO PERFORM AT PASCIFICON ON OCTOBER 15

Michael Pechner, NE6RD, reports that weather permitting, the group Parachute Mobile will be doing a doing a jump on October 15th. This, in coordination with the Pacificon ARRL Pacific Division Convention being held in Santa Clara, California the weekend of October 14th to the 16th.

Pechner tells Newsline that live video of the flight will be streamed to the World-Wide-Web on Justin dot tv as well at fast scan amateur television outlets. There will also be a live APRS feed using Google Earth mapping showing the APRS beacons with about a 90 second delay. This, due to how aprs-is works.

Sound interesting? Well you can learn more by simply taking your web browser to www.parachutemobile.com, and following the updates. (NE6RD)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: NEWSLINE TO HOST TOWN MEETINGS AT TWO CALIFORNIA CONVENTIONS

And speaking about Pacificon, it will be one of two venues where Amateur Radio Newsline producer Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF will be hosting two of our popular Ham Radio Town Meetings.

The first of these will take place on Saturday, September 10th at the aRRL Southwest Division Convention to be held at the Marriott Torrance South Bay hotel in the city of Torrance. There the topic will be a repeat of this years Dayton Hamvention Town Meeting titled How to Make a Ham Radio Movie in the 21st century. At airtime the speakers list includes Hollywood Producer Director Dave Bell, W6AQ; video Post Production Editor Frosty Oden, N6ENV, PBS cameraman George Barker, NA1F and amateur film maker Dennis Smith, KA6GSE. For more information on this event take your web browser to www dot hamconinc dot org and click on the words Tech Talks.

On Saturdary, October 15th Bill will be hosting an Amateur Radio Newsline Ham Radio Town Meeting at Pacificon 2011. The title of this session is "Peering Into the Future: Amateur Radio 100 Years From Now." And helping to give us all a glimpse at ham radio in the year 2011 will be IARU Secretary Rod Stafford, W6ROD; ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD; Nobel Laureate Joe Taylor, K1JT and emergency communications futurist David Witkowski, W6DTW. The venue for this session is the Marriott Santa Clara, in Santa Clara, California in Salons 1, 2 and 3 from 1 to 3 PM Pacific Daylight time. More information on this one is on-line at www.pacificon.org. We hope to

see you at one of these two sessions or maybe at both.
(ARNewsline(tm))

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HAM HAPPENINGS: THE HUNTSVILLE HAMFEST

And two major events are taking place at about the time this newscast goes to air. First up is the 2011 Huntsville Hamfest being held August 20th and 21st at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Activities include DX Card Checking, numerous hospitality suites, license exams and presentation of the 2011 Young Ham of the Year Award to 11 year old Kaitlyn Cole, KS3P, of Harvest, Alabama.

This year's Young Ham of the Year Award ceremony will be hosted by Amateur Radio Newsline's own Don Wilbanks, AE5DW. He will be joined by representatives of the awards principal corporate underwriters Vertex Standard and CQ Magazine.

This years Huntsville Hamfest will again be net-cast live on the World-Wide-Web at W5KUB dot com. Be sure to tune in and enjoy the festivities vicariously if you cannot be there in person. More information on the Huntsville Hamfest itself is on-line at www.hamfest.org. (ARNewsline(tm))

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HAM HAPPENINGS: THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW TWIT.TV BRICK HOUSE TV STUDIOS IN PETALUMA CA

August 20th and 21st will also see the grand opening of Leo LaPorte's new TWIT.TV studios in Petaluma, California. According to Bob Heil, K9EID, who hosts the show Ham Nation on the TWIT network, a special event station will be active on 40 and 20 meters in the afternoon and evenings both days to commemorate the official opening of the facility.

The call sign to be used will be W6KB. This is the club call of the Redwood Empire DX Association whose members have been instrumental in the planning and installation of the ham radio antenna system during the final construction of the new broadcast facility.

Leo Laporte, who now holds the apropos vanity call sign W6TWT will be your host. His TWIT Brick House Studios are located at 140 Keller St. in Petaluma, California. Tours of the new facility, its ham radio station and its classic Collins AM broadcast transmitter will be available 10 am to 7 pm local time each day to all amateur radio operators passing through the area.

And if you happen to work station W6KB during this grand opening event, please QSL direct to W6TWT, P O Box 1018 in Petaluma, California, 94953. You can also drop in and watch the happenings on the web at live.twit.tv. (K9EID)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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INTRUDER WATCH: CODAR AT 24 MHZ

DK2OM reports via the IARU Region 1 website that a Codar ocean wave radar is disturbing radio operations in the 24.920 to 24.990 MHz and its happening around the clock. The location of the offending system is believed to be at or near Venice, Italy. Those hearing these signals report them to your nations Intruder Watch committee.

Codar is an acronym for the Coastal Ocean Dynamics Applications Radar that describes a type of compact High Frequency radar system developed between 1973 and 1983 at the NOAA Wave Propagation Laboratory. It utilizes High Frequency surface wave propagation to remotely measure surface ocean currents and wave height. (IARU)

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WORLDBEAT: HUNGARIAN CHANNEL 1 TV TRANSMITTER GOES AWAY

Hams in Hungary are no longer bothered by a Channel 1 television transmitter wiping out the 6 meter band. At 00:00 on August 15th that TV transmitter was finally closed down after 54 years in service. This, as a part of Europe's overall conversion to digital only operations on the UHF bands. Channel 1 TV operations had been causing considerable interference on 50 MHz to amateur radio operators in the Budapest and surrounding areas. (Southgate)

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WORDBEAT: DUTCH HAM RADIO BULLETINS NOW ON CPMMERCIAL RADIO

A report from the VERON which is the Dutch National Amateur Radio Society headquarters station PI4AA is now a part of that nations RTV Stadskanaal programming. This, as a part of the RTVS Media that covers topics in Amateur Radio, local radio and local news media.

The ham radio report airs every last Tuesday of the month from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m local Netherlands time. This unique partnership is made possible because the PI4AA broadcasts meet the requirements of the standard for I-C-E local public broadcasting. I-C-E stands for Information, Culture and Education.

The broadcast area is south-east and east area of Holland on terrestrial stations 105.3 and 107.8 MHz FM. The cable frequency is 104.1 MHz FM. Listeners outside of The Netherlands can tune in on the web at tinyurl.com/dutch-hamcast. (VERON)

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WORLDBEAT: MS0INT ISLE OF ROCKFALL IN SPRING 2012

A team of four highly experienced Isands on the Air activators have plans to operate from the extremely rare and dangerous Isle of Rockall next spring. The four operators are identified as EA2TA, EA3NT, IZ7ATN and MM0NDX. All are part of the larger MS0INT Adventure Group which has previously been on air from several other hard to reach sites.

Completing the team is Nick Hancock, a noted climber with considerable experience in reachinbg inhospitable places. They aim to stay atop Rockall for maximum 48 hours, in what will be considered one of the most ambitious island activations the ham radio world has seen. Hopes are to be on the air in late May or early June of 2012. (Rockall 2012 Team)

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DX

In DX, word that ZL1AAO, will be on the air from Rarotonga in the South Cook Islands, beginning August 19th for 10 days. He will sign as E51AAO and will operate holiday style using SSB only on 40through 10 meters. QSL only via Logbook of the World, eQSL or direct only. He will upload his log when he returns home.

OK1XD will be active from Lichtenstein portable HB0 between September 1st to the 10th. Operations will be holiday style on 80 through 10 meters using mainly RTTY and PSK31, with some SSB and CW. QSL via his home callsign, either direct or via the bureau.

ZS6AYU, will be active stroke A25 from Botswana between September 9th to the 11th. Operations will probably be on 40 through 10 meters including the 17 and 12 meters using CW only. QSL via ZS6AYU.

KI0SO is active as A35CT from Lifuka Island, Tongo on 20 through 6 meters mostly using SSB. The length of his stay is unknown. QSL via KI0SO to hid Callbook address and expect to wait a while for a response.

A team of German operators will activate Namibia between early December and mid-January of 2012. Operators mentioned are DJ2HD, DH3WO, DK1CE and DJ2BQ, each signing portable V5. Activity will be on 160 through 10 meters using CW, SSB and RTTY. QSL as directed on the air.

And lastly I2KRR is a volunteer technical support person to the Catholic mission in Vanimo and will be active as P29FR in Papua New Guinea until March of 2012. He operates on 40, 20 and 15 meter SSB with his time on the air limited to the local evenings, plus Saturday and Sunday afternoons. QSL without any IRC's to I2RFJ, either direct or by the Bureau.

(Above from various DX news sources)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: PLEASE REMOVE THE BATTERIES BEFORE YOU SHIP ANYTHING THAT TICKS

And finally this week the tale of the ticking box. It comes from Portage, Michigan where an electronic metronome was the cause of a Post Office scare Saturday morning August 13th.

It seems that postal workers noticed a ticking noise coming from a package around 5:30 a.m. Fearing the worst, Portage Police along with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety's bomb squad were called in to investigate and the Post Office was evacuated.

In this case, authorities were able to get in contact with the owner of the package, who told police that there was nothing more than an electronic metronome inside. Even so, prior to employees being allowed back inside the building, the bomb squad went in and removed the package. Upon investigation, bomb squad personnel did find nothing more than an electronic metronome inside the package. Postal workers were allowed back into the Post Office just before 8 a.m..

And all this comes with a few words of advice. If you plan to mail a metronome, a clock or anything that makes a ticking noise, take out the batteries before you ship it. That can save your community thousands of dollars spent on an un-needed emergency response and save you a lot of grief. (Kalamazoo News and other published news reports)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News and Australia's WIA News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is Newsline (at) arnewsline (dot) org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), 28197 Robin Avenue, Santa Clarita California, 91350

Again, a reminder that this coming September 11th will be the 10th anniversary of the al-Queda backed terrorist attacks on September 11th of 2001. Attacks that felled the two World Trade Center tower buildings in New York City and damaged the Pentagon when radical Moslem extremists high-jacked four United States flag carrier jetliners and crashed them into the two structures and killing over 3000 American citizens.

Over the years there have been several ham radio operations in remembrance of those whose lives were lost in this senseless and wanton carnage. With this being the first decade anniversary of the September 11th, 2001 tragedy, we are trying to compile a list of radio clubs and individuals who are planning any form of ham radio memorial operation to honor those whose lives were lost that day.

Already a group in Pennsylvania and another in New York City are

planning on-the-air commemorative operations. If you of any others please drop us an e-mail to newsline at arnewsline dot org and let us know all of the details. We in turn will list as many as we can on our website at www.arnewsline.org starting this week.

Those whose lives were lost on 911 deserve to be remembered. We will do our part by providing web-space to list ham radio commemorative activities. It's up to you to do the rest.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editor's desk, I'm Jim Davis, W2JKD, saying 73 and we thank you for listening.

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